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ABSTRACT

The fall 1984 implementation of tuition in California's community colleges created the need for aggressive strategies to counter the anticipated, major enrollment decline. For the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), those strategies involved a new campaign incorporating districtwide and campus-oriented events, as well as the establishment of a District Recruitment Committee. The districtwide campaign involved radio, television, and newspaper announcements designed to provide information about financial assistance, tuition waivers, and the LACCD academic calendar. The campaign sought to provide broad market coverage while still targeting the traditional college-age person. Campaign results for summer 1984 included 4,654 requests for enrollment information and the distribution of 6,544 college class schedules. Community surveys assessing the effectiveness of various efforts indicated that newspapers were the most widely used medium for obtaining information on educational opportunities. Recruitment efforts at the nine LACCD campuses varied in number and scope according to each school. Each campus established a recruitment/marketing committee and undertook activities such as the provision of information booths on campus, campus tours, the creation of Spanish-language registration materials, the sponsorship of high school career days, and the development of a "telephone tree" to contact continuing and prospective students. The recruitment activities at the LACCD have minimized the enrollment decline and promoted a pervasive atmosphere of teamwork. (AYC)

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This issue of the **Bulletin** *was prepared by:*
Leslie Koltai, Chancellor,
Los Angeles Community College District

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LACCD Establishes Recruitment Committee To Stave Off Major Enrollment Decline

This issue of the **Bulletin** *was prepared by:*
Leslie Koltai, Chancellor,
Los Angeles Community College District

The Fall, 1984 implementation of first-time-ever tuition in California's community colleges created the need for aggressive strategies to counter what was widely – and correctly – anticipated to be a major enrollment decline. For the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), those strategies have involved a new campaign incorporating wide-ranging District and campus-oriented events, as well as establishment of a District Recruitment Committee to encourage participation in activities to recruit students.

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And, while the LACCD, like other districts throughout the state, still experienced a drop in the number of enrollees, the campaign – which began spring, 1984 – has kept the decline from reaching the levels it might otherwise have hit. The recruitment activities have also encouraged an atmosphere of teamwork that has carried over into subsequent projects. Many of the activities initiated during the early days of the campaign have since become integral parts of the regular routine. In addition, public opinion surveys conducted as part of the recruitment drive are providing the District with valuable data upon which to base future activities.

The district-wide campaign, which will be discussed in detail in this **Bulletin**, involved radio, television, and newspaper advertisements and announcements designed to inform students that:

- even with the $50 tuition for full-time students, our colleges still offer the best educational bargain around,
- financial assistance is available to those in need,
- tuition may be waived for those who qualify,
- the District academic calendar has been changed, creating earlier-than-usual starting dates for all sessions.

The ads and public service announcements were positive in tone, emphasizing the wisdom of selecting one of the nine Los Angeles Community Colleges as the **first choice** rather than the **last chance** for post-secondary education. Campus activities were designed to complement the District message while also encouraging closer identification with the individual colleges by potential students.

Because of the dual approach utilizing both District and campus activities, two full-time employees (a faculty member and an administrator) were assigned to work exclusively on supporting and facilitating recruitment efforts. Those two individuals were charged with:

- facilitating faculty involvement in recruitment activities,

Faculty members were gratified that a colleague was providing regular input on all recruitment activities.

- serving as liaisons between the colleges and the District office, which is particularly important for the LACCD with its nine campuses,
- collecting recruitment data from all of the colleges,
- serving as a central clearing house for campus materials, making certain that each college was aware of what was going on elsewhere in the district,
- identifying District and college staff responsible for student recruitment activities,
- identifying staff concerns about recruitment,
- planning and conducting meetings with District and campus personnel involved in recruitment,
- conducting a follow-up survey to evaluate recruitment activities and arrive at recommendations for improvements.

Reaction to appointment of the faculty member and administrator was generally quite favorable. Faculty members seemed gratified that a colleague was providing regular input on all recruitment activities, and they utilized what they rightfully saw as a ready avenue for their comments, observations, and suggestions on the recruitment process.

District-Wide Campaign

The LACCD's Office of Communications Services undertook a multi-media advertising/public relations campaign.

- Advertisements were placed in the student newspapers of major feeder high schools serving our colleges. These advertisements featured coded clip-out coupons to be mailed to the District Office of Communications Services, where schedules of classes for specific colleges were sent to prospective enrollees. In addition, the mailing lists generated by the coupons are being used for follow-up activities.
- Advertisements were placed in student newspapers published by local four-year colleges and universities regarding the summer session. Once again, coded clip-out coupons provided the means for follow-up contacts, as well as assessment of the effectiveness of the various ad placements.
- Advertisements were placed in local general circulation newspapers in addition to special audience publications. Coded clip-outs were used.
- Articles, news releases, and notices were distributed to internal publications.
- News releases were distributed to the newspapers throughout our service area.
- Public service announcements were distributed to all radio and television stations in the area.
- Radio advertisements were aired on several specially-selected stations utilizing District-produced, 60-second messages.

The thrust of this campaign has been to provide broad market coverage while still aiming a special appeal to the traditional college-age person. The message has focused on the tremendous educational value provided by our colleges, the high academic quality of LACCD offerings, the convenience of attending a college close to home, and the opportunities for career training and/or transfer.

According to an analysis of responses to the campaign for Summer 1984 Session, Districtwide efforts resulted in a total of 4,654 requests for enrollment information and distribution of 6,544 college class schedules. For Fall, a total of 1,691 requests for enrollment information were received, with 2,529 class schedules mailed to prospective students. (More schedules were distributed than there were responses because some respondents

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requested schedules for more than one college.) The accompanying charts provide a breakdown of the number of responses generated by each medium.

As noted earlier, mailing lists compiled from responses to the ads also serve as the basis for follow-up activities, including public opinion surveys sent to those who do – and do not – eventually enroll in a district college. The surveys solicit information in four major areas: source of information the individual uses to decide on which college to attend, helpfulness of the materials received in response to the inquiry, reasons why the respondent did or did not enroll, and plans for future attendance at a District college.

The vast majority of potential students use newspapers as their primary source of information about education opportunities.

The surveys conducted so far indicate that newspapers are by far the most widely used medium for obtaining information on educational opportunities. Nearly 43 percent of the respondents have indicated that they learned about the LACCD session for which they expressed interest by reading a newspaper ad. Materials available on campus were cited as the main source of information by 18 percent, while 16.5 percent learned about the LACCD from a friend, 13 percent from a radio ad, and 9.7 percent from other sources.

Ninety-three percent of those surveyed said that they found the materials they received to be helpful. Seventy-four percent indicated that they intend to enroll in one of the Los Angeles Community Colleges in the future, 12 percent were uncertain about their educational plans, and 14 percent said they were not planning to enroll at a LACCD campus, primarily because of plans to attend a four-year institution.

Campus Recruitment Activities

Recruitment activities at the nine campuses are generally targeted to high school students in their area, varying in number and scope according to each college's perception of what is most effective in reaching the students they hope to attract.

Each campus has established a recruitment/marketing committee consisting of students, faculty, classified staff, and administrators. The District supplied $3,000 to fund the first round of recruitment activities at each college. College foundations, Associated Student Organizations, and the President's Hospitality Funds have been among the other financial sources used by the campuses.

At all colleges, the funds were primarily used for advertising (including fliers, posters, banners, and newspaper ads) as well as for personal contact situations, such as campus tours, College Advisement Days, luncheons for high school personnel, orientation sessions, job fairs, cultural festivals, individualized letters, and supplies to accomplish those tasks.

In addition, faculty members at some colleges visited local high schools, special packets were sent to various community groups, bumper stickers and recruitment editions of campus newspapers were printed, and video announcements were shown in the campus Learning Resource Centers. The following list describes other activities undertaken at specific campuses:

- Information booths were set up on the campus at Los Angeles City College, college administrators appeared on a variety of television talk shows to discuss the college's educational opportunities, and hundreds of high school students attended a special orientation session. Because the college attracts students from an extremely broad range of ethnic groups, press releases were targeted to each of the ethnic newspapers, focusing on opportunities for – and success stories of – students from that specific heritage. Special efforts were made through high school visitations and television public service announcements to publicize the college's Handicapped Student Services programs and the "Homebound" project for those who are bedridden.

- Lapel buttons with the message, "ELAC's Got It", were distributed by East Los Angeles College at Principals' Day and other special events. Mailers were sent to senior citizens centers, Special Education Newsletters were distributed at service agencies in the community, and posters were given to local merchants for display. Brochures on financial assistance opportunities, campus services, and admissions procedures were distributed by the thousands.

- Hundreds of high school students attended the special campus tours conducted by Los Angeles Harbor College, and recuitment personnel from the college visited local businesses and industries to inform their employees about the college's programs to update and upgrade both academic and professional skills.

- Registration materials in Spanish were distributed by Los Angeles Mission College, which is located in an area with a large Hispanic population. In addition to recruitment activities similar to those of other colleges, Mission sent recruitment materials and personnel to churches, post offices, movie theaters, and swap meets. College personnel spent hours calling continuing students who had not yet registered, and the "I ♥ L.A. Mission College" bumper stickers appeared on 1,000 cars around the community.

- At Los Angeles Pierce College, approximately 20,000 special editions of the campus newspaper were distributed on and off campus. Brochures were sent to prospective students in specific fields of study,

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and more than 200 high school students attended departmental presentations, a luncheon, and an art exhibit at High School Day.

- The telephone played an important role in recruitment activities at Los Angeles Southwest College. Students used a "Telephone Tree" to contact all continuing students, and non-teaching personnel telephoned prospective students during evening hours. Brochures were distributed to churches, service organizations, and business groups, and fliers were distributed at shopping malls, employment departments, welfare offices, libraries, fairs, and concerts.
- Los Angeles Trade-Technical College sponsored High School Career Days for students planning to prepare for jobs in specific fields such as cosmotology and fashion. Visitations were made to schools for the deaf, local medical centers, and the California State Department of Rehabilitation. Approximately 500 local high school students attended a mathematics competition held on campus, approximately 500 potential students visited the VocEd Week Displays in the Learning Resource Center, and 120 local high schools and 200 local employers were invited to attend an Open House sponsored by specific technology departments. The college also hosted the statewide VICA (Vocational and Industrial Clubs of America) Olympics, at which students competed in specific vocational skills.
- In addition to activities of a more traditional nature, Los Angeles Valley College demonstrated creative means to acquire funding for its recruitment activities. Students donated money to produce a recruitment films produced by the college's Theater Arts Department. Lunches for 150 high school seniors were paid for by local Rotary Clubs, and the Patrons Association served breakfast to local high school principals, with the food costs donated by Associated Students Organization, which also paid for printing of bumper stickers.
- An all-College Advisement Day, a luncheon for high school counselors and advisors, and a wide range of other activities were used by West Los Angeles College to stimulate recruitment.

In a follow-up survey, the colleges reported that they considered the most successful activities to be those in which there was some personal contact with potential students or high school representatives. Campus tours, high school visitations, and luncheons for high school principals and counselors received particularly high marks as effective recruitment activities.

Fringe benefits from the campaign included a positive reaction to being in a proactive rather than a reactive stance. The recruitment activities have sparked their own interest in planning and executing long-range activities along this line, and a continuation of college emphasis on recruitment is anticipated.

The campaign has also stimulated communication throughout the District, and has even helped to dispel some misconceptions. For example, several faculty members have reported that they had previously considered recruitment to be the province of college counselors and hadn't realized what an important part they could play in this process.

When asked what they would do differently in the future, both college and District representatives indicated they will begin recruitment activities earlier in the year, plan a wider range of activities, make earlier contact with high school counselors, and involve more faculty and administrators in planning and carrying out recruitment efforts.

DISTRICTWIDE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Results for Summer Session:

	Total	*% of Total*
I. *Responses by Medium*		
Newspapers	3,159	67.88
Radio	684	14.70
High School Papers	357	7.67
College & University Papers	324	6.96
Miscellaneous	130	2.79
II. *Enrollees by Medium (% of total)*		
Radio	11.76%	
Newspapers	50.00	
High School papers	17.32	
College Papers	16.01	
Miscellaneous	4.91	
III. *Entrance Level of Enrollees (% of total)*		
New Students	74.5%	
Continuing Students		
Returning Students	25.5	

Results for Fall Session:

	Total	*% of Total*
I. *Responses by Medium*		
Newspapers	1,026	60.7
Radio	518	30.6
Miscellaneous	147	8.7
II. *Enrollees by Medium (% of total)*		
Radio	32.0%	
Newspapers	55.2	
Miscellaneous	12.8	
III. *Entrance Level of Enrollees (% of total)*		
New Students	62%	
Continuing Students		
Returning Students	38%	

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